

6. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the aqueous composition comprises the compound H_2SiF_6 .

16. (Amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the additional acid is present at a level within the range of about 20 mole % to about 70 mole %.

23. (Twice Amended) A method for removing a coating and an oxide material from a substrate, comprising the step of exposing the substrate to an aqueous composition under conditions sufficient to remove substantially all of the oxide material and substantially all of the coating, wherein the aqueous composition comprises an acid having the formula H_xAF_6 , or precursors to said acid, wherein A is selected from the group consisting of Si, Ge, Ti, and Ga; and x is 1-6, and wherein the precursors to said acid comprise any compound or group of compounds which can be combined to form the acid or its dianion AF_6^{-2} under reactive conditions.

24. (Amended) A method for removing an oxide material from a diffusion- or overlay coating on the surface of a turbine engine component, comprising the step of contacting the oxide material with an aqueous composition which comprises H_2SiF_6 .

27. (Amended) A method for replacing a worn or damaged protective coating applied over a substrate, comprising the following steps:

(i) removing an oxide material from the surface of a coating disposed on the substrate, by contacting the oxide material with an aqueous composition which comprises an acid having the formula H_xAF_6 , or precursors to said acid, wherein A is selected from the group consisting of Si, Ge, Ti, and Ga; and x is 1-6;

(ii) removing the coating disposed on the substrate, by contacting the coating with an aqueous composition which comprises an acid having the formula H_xAF_6 , or precursors to said acid, wherein A is selected from the group consisting of Si, Ge, Ti, and Ga; and x is 1-6; and then

(iii) applying a new coating to the substrate.